



TEXAS GENERAL LAND OFFICE JERRY PATTERSON, COMMISSIONER

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PRESS RELEASE

Patterson takes aim at Progress Texas form letter campaign

Texas Land Commissioner calls on "slacktivists" to practice informed debate

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AUSTIN — After receiving more than 3,000 auto-generated e-mails from a recent Progress Texas online campaign about school finance, Texas Land Commissioner Jerry Patterson today went on the offensive against the organization, blasting them for their support of what he calls a "slacktivist" campaign that preys on an uninformed public and devalues public discourse.

"The members of Progress Texas should be ashamed of themselves," Patterson said. "Not only was the mass email letter they generated misleading, it was plain wrong. For an organization that encourages citizens to "take action," all they did was dumb down the debate and confuse citizens trying to make an impact on public policy."

Patterson has written a response and his agency is in the process of sending it to every individual who allowed Progress Texas to send the erroneous letter on their behalf.

"Form-letter campaigns accomplish nothing other than to delegate civic duty to a politically motivated organization more interested in capturing emails and raising money than informing public debate," Patterson said. "I don't fault the individuals who are led astray by Progress Texas. They're probably genuinely concerned about this issue and saw this as an easy way to make their voices heard. Unfortunately, they went with a group that doesn't have a clue."

Patterson said the increased use of instant, auto generated, mass emails - dubbed slacktivism - is a troubling trend.

"This kind of slacktivism just lowers the public debate and increases cynicism when folks don't get the response they were looking for," Patterson said. "These mass emails, especially when factually wrong, have no credibility with any policymaker. People ought to take the time to get informed and think for themselves."

Patterson's response letter closes with this call to action: "If you are serious about your commitment to Texas public education, I encourage you to personally contact the Land Office for more information. The schoolchildren of Texas deserve your full participation."

Read Patterson's full letter [here](#) .

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